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ABSTRACT

This paper summarizes research on the effects of television viewing on student achievement. Information concerning students in the San Juan Unified School District in California is highlighted. Studies have revealed that: (1) watching more than 3 hours of television a day prevents students from engaging in other activities; (2) moderate television viewing can provide children from certain backgrounds with information which would otherwise be inaccessible to them; (3) educational children's programs help children develop prereading skills; (4) students who watch television news programs score higher on achievement tests than other students; (5) students from low SES families watch more television than students from high SES families; (6) students in the San Juan district who watch 3 or more hours of television a day score lower on achievement tests than students who watch less than 3 hours; (7) students in the San Juan district watch less television as they get older; and (8) students in the San Juan district watch less television today than they did 5 years ago, and less television than students statewide. (Four graphs/charts are attached.) (BC)

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SAN JUAN UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT
RESEARCH AND EVALUATION DEPARTMENT
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ED345874

TELEVISION VIEWING HABITS OF SAN JUAN STUDENTS RELATED TO ACHIEVEMENT

August 1991

During the last several years many research studies have investigated the effects of television on student achievement. Some of this research is summarized below along with specific information about students in San Juan District.

TELEVISION VIEWING HABITS AND STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT

- Excessive TV And Lower Achievement. Students in San Juan District who watch two or three hours or more of television per day tend to score lower on achievement tests than students who watch less TV. This information is consistent with state and national trends. (*See Attachments 1 & 2.*)

- Too Much TV Can Prevent Students From Participating In Other Enriching Activities. Research studies indicate that watching television more than two to three hours a day has a negative influence on student achievement because it prevents students from engaging in other activities such as homework, leisure reading, sports, hobbies and social interaction.

- TV Can Provide Enrichment and Stimulation. "Moderate TV viewing can, however, actually help students from backgrounds in which books, magazines, and other mind-enriching resources are in short supply. In such cases, television can expand children's horizons, introduce them to new concepts, give them information which would otherwise be inaccessible, stimulate their imaginations, and enlarge their vocabularies." From *What Works,* page 13.)

- Programs Help Teach Pre-Reading Skills. Research studies conducted in the 70's found that educational programs for young children like "Sesame Street" and "The Electric Company" have a positive impact on student achievement since it assists them in developing pre-reading skills. These programs were especially beneficial to students from educationally deprived homes. (*Encyclopedia of Educational Research,* page 1334.)

- News Programs Raise Achievement. Students who watch a moderate to light amount of television and tend to watch local and national news programs tend to score higher on achievement tests. (*Survey of Sixth Grade School Achievement and Television Habits: CAP 1982.*)

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- Family Socio-Economic Level Related To TV Viewing Habits. Students from families of lower socio-economic levels tend to watch considerably more television than students from higher socio-economic families. (*CAP Reports.*) Even when socio-economic backgrounds are controlled, students who watch three or more hours of television per day score lower on achievement tests than students who watch less than three hours per day.

HOURS WATCHING TELEVISION

- Students Watch Less TV As They Get Older. In San Juan District, approximately 29 percent of the 6th grade students reported watching 3 or more hours of television per day. Twenty-three percent (23%) reported watching 2 to 3 hours per day. By the 8th grade, students reported watching less television with 26 percent reporting 3 or more hours and only 19 percent indicating 2 to 3 hours. By the end of high school, only 12 percent reported watching 3 or more hours and 16 percent watch 2 to 3 hours. (*1990 CAP Reports*)

- Students Watch Less TV Than Five Years Ago. When the viewing habits of students in 1990 were compared with 5 years before, dramatically fewer students were watching excessive amounts of television. For example, in 1986, 46 percent of the 6th graders reported watching 3 or more hours per day compared to 29 percent in 1990. This drop also occurs at 8th and 12th. grade levels. (*See Attachment 3.*)

- San Juan Students Watch Less TV Than Students Statewide. Five years ago students in our district were watching approximately at the same amount of television as students statewide. Although television viewing habits have dropped slightly at the state level, statewide rates are now considerably higher than district rates. This means that fewer of our students are watching excessive amounts of television than students across the state. (*See Attachments 3 and 4.*)

SUMMARY

As has always been true, students who watch excessive amounts of television tend to score lower on student achievement tests. However, light or moderate amounts of television may be beneficial to students, especially if the programs stimulate discussion, help to expand their vocabularies, or inform them about historical or current events.

Compared to five years ago, fewer students in San Juan District are watching excessive amounts of television. In addition, San Juan students watch considerably less TV than students statewide.

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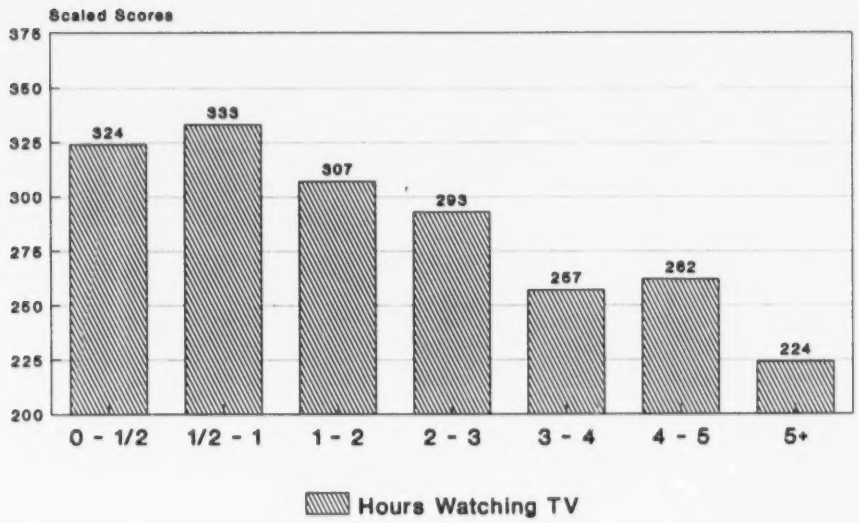
12TH GRADE CAP 1990
READING SCALED SCORES BY HOURS OF TV
TOTAL DISTRICT



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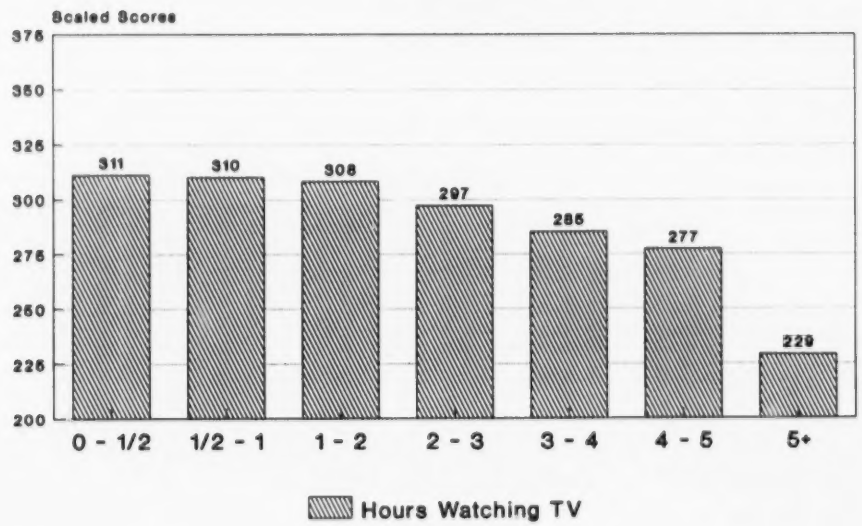
8TH GRADE CAP 1990
READING SCALED SCORES BY HOURS OF TV
TOTAL DISTRICT



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SAN JUAN UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT ATTACHMENT 3
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HOURS WATCHING T.V.

PERCENT OF STUDENTS

TOTAL DISTRICT

	1986	1987	1988	1989	1990
12th GRADE					
0 - 1 hr	31%	31%	33%	33%	35%
1 - 2 hr	25%	27%	23%	24%	23%
2 - 3 hr	17%	17%	14%	16%	16%
3+ hr	17%	16%	14%	15%	12%
8th GRADE					
0 - 1 hr	14%	16%	14%	19%	20%
1 - 2 hr	20%	22%	17%	20%	24%
2 - 3 hr	21%	23%	21%	20%	19%
3+ hr	43%	29%	33%	30%	26%
6th GRADE					
0 - 1 hr	12%	15%	15%	19%	22%
1 - 2 hr	18%	18%	21%	24%	25%
2 - 3 hr	22%	20%	21%	22%	23%
3+ hr	46%	45%	41%	35%	29%

Source: CAP Reports

92.030

SAN JUAN UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT ATTACHMENT 4
RESEARCH AND EVALUATION DEPARTMENT

HOURS WATCHING T.V.

PERCENT OF STUDENTS

TOTAL STATE

	1986	1987	1988	1989	1990
12th GRADE					
0 - 1 hr	30%	28%	32%	31%	31%
1 - 2 hr	24%	23%	23%	23%	23%
2 - 3 hr	17%	17%	15%	16%	16%
3+ hr	21%	21%	18%	19%	18%
8th GRADE					
0 - 1 hr	15%	15%	12%	15%	16%
1 - 2 hr	19%	19%	17%	19%	20%
2 - 3 hr	22%	21%	19%	19%	20%
3+ hr	45%	44%	37%	36%	34%
6th GRADE					
0 - 1 hr	14%	15%	16%	17%	17%
1 - 2 hr	18%	18%	19%	20%	21%
2 - 3 hr	20%	20%	20%	21%	22%
3+ hr	46%	45%	45%	42%	40%

Source: CAP Reports

92.030